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PROCEEDINGS OF SCIENTIFIC SOCIETIES.

Boston Society of Natural History.—November 7, 1888.—Prof. H. W. Conn, of Wesleyan University, read a paper on "Insect Larvæ and their relation to the adults"; and Mr. S. F. Denton exhibited models of animals prepared from a new material possessing many advantages.

Biological Society of Washington.—The 131st regular meeting, December 1st, 1888.—The following papers were read: Dr. Th. Gill, "On the relations of the Psychrolutidæ"; Dr. C. Hart Merriam, "Description of a new Ground Squirrel from California"; Mr. F. W. True, "Remarks on the Deer of Central America," with exhibition of specimens; Prof. C. V. Riley, "Notes on the Economy of Thalessa and Tremex"; Prof. B. E. Fernow, "Causes of configuration of trees."

Natural Science Association of Staten Island.—*February 11th, 1888.*—On motion of Mr. Hollick the following preamble and resolutions were adopted:—

Whereas, Our attention has been called to the title of a bill recently introduced in the Assembly, designed to allow the shooting of robins on Long and Staten Islands during the month of October, and,

Whereas, Such legislation would be a gross injustice to our Island, and would be a source of needless cruelty and destruction to our birds.

Resolved, That the Natural Science Association of Staten Island earnestly protests against the passage of this or any similar legislation, which tends to convert our Island into a legal shooting ground for the idle persons of New York and vicinity; and

Resolved, That copies of this preamble and resolutions be transmitted to the newspapers of the county and to our representatives in the Legislature, with the request that they use their best efforts to defeat the bill in question.

Mr. L. P. Gratacap made the following remarks upon the "boiling springs":—

During the very cold weather which visited us in January, culminating on January 27, and lowering the average night temperature to within a few degrees of zero, while the thermometer registered 12°–15° F. as its maximum in the day, the temperature of a group of springs on the hillside, south of Castleton avenue and near Bement, was taken. There were found to range from 44° to 53° F., the colder water being due to a less rapid flow and consequently longer exposure at the springs' vent to the atmospheric influence. These springs, known as the "Boiling Springs," doubtless arise from below the impervious beds of clay, which may be seen outcropping along the sides of the gulches in the neighborhood washed out by freshets. While it seems unlikely that they issue from such a depth as sixty or eighty feet, which is assigned by Guyot as the limits of the zone of invariable temperature at our latitude, it is quite certain that points of origin are deep seated and almost, if not entirely, removed from superficial influence. The observation of Mr. W. T. Davis upon the Summer temperature of the Clove Valley springs corroborates this. He found that to be from 53° to 54°; almost identical with the Winter temperature of these springs at the coldest period of the season. The water flowing with this elevated temperature nourished an abundant growth of the common fresh water alga (*Conferva vulgaris* Rab.), which in turn supported in its thick and confused clusters numerous diatoms and infusoria. The green stems of a species of Veronica, too immature for determination, flourished abundantly in the tepid rivulet escaping from the tiny pools, while within a few feet last Summer's grasses were frozen in a crust of ice.

Mr. Wm. T. Davis read a portion of a letter from Mr. Aug. R. Grote. The extract is as follows: In 1856 I found *Clematis ochroleuca* growing on Kellett's Hill, near Egbertville, on the Southern slope near the top. My specimens went to the late Hon. Geo. W. Clinton, botanist, of Albany. I also collected a specimen of the fork-tailed flycatcher, *Milvulus tyrannus*, near our farm of Hill Park, towards the south-west side of the Island.

March 10th.—Mr. Arthur Hollick read the following notes, illustrated by drawings and dried specimens:—

During the Autumn of 1881 a species of sedge was found in company with *Callitriche verna* and *Dichelyma capillaceum* growing on the bottom of one of the springs near the present site of the S. I. Water Supply Co. It was proliferous, and showed no signs of either perfect flower or fruit, but as it was rather late in the season a more favorable time was awaited in which to collect and study it. The spring was deep, with walled sides and a clean sandy bottom and was never known to freeze, even in the severest winter. The plant was entirely aquatic—no part of it ever growing to the surface of the water. During the succeeding year it was visited from time to time in the hopes of obtaining either the flower or fruit, but without success. Specimens were however collected with aborted proliferous spikes, and it was finally admitted provisionally by Dr. Britton and myself into the Flora of Richmond county, in the appendix for 1883-84, under the name *Heleocharis prolifera* Torr (?). Since then it has been kept under constant scrutiny, but has never been found with flowers, and we were forced to conclude that it did not produce any. It was naturally with some trepidation that it was determined to be this plant, as its habitat is given by Chapman, in his "Flora of the Southern States" to be from Florida to N. Carolina, and from there to Staten Island seemed a very extensive jump for the plant to take, without any intermediate locality from which it could have spread. Within the past six weeks, however, we have received specimens from the neighborhood of Trenton, N. J., which is a little more encouraging. It is well also to bear in mind that the place which this southern plant secured from its home so far north is just such a one as we would expect, namely, a perennial spring, which never freezes and in fact which maintains a constant temperature throughout the year of about 53°. So far as known, it failed to secure a foothold at any other locality on the Island, and the specimens which are now in our herbaria are probably the only ones which will ever be seen from here, as the spring has become silted up and all signs of life obliterated.

I was interested to find the following note in Dr. Torrey's monograph on the Cyperaceæ of N. America, p. 315-16: "Among my undetermined Cyperaceæ is a species of Eleocharis from the Southern States, which I have never been able to obtain with mature fruit. * * * * The spike is ovate and compressed, but instead of producing flowers it throws out a tuft of long filiform peduncles or rather culms, one from the axil of each scale, which strike root into the mud or float on the surface of the water and likewise bear proliferous spikes. * * * * I am inclined to consider this species as distinct from any other described in this monograph. It may be distinguished by the name of *E. prolifera*."

Again, in the Columbia College Herbarium, accompanying a specimen labeled *E. prolifera*, is a note by Dr. Torrey, which reads: "This may be a state of my *Chætocyperus baldwinnii* and the plant referred to in Baldwin's notes. * * * *"

Careful comparisons have been made between our specimens and those in the Columbia College Herbarium, under the names *Heleocharis baldwinii* Torr. and *H. prolifera* Torr., but our material is too imperfect to definitely determine just where it belongs. The specimens, while showing the general characteristics of the above-mentioned species differ in having a stiff jointed woody rachis, along which the spikes are arranged alternately, and at the summit of which they are closely appressed into a somewhat imbricated cluster. Several of the plants have also produced runners or stolons which bear the proliferous spikes at irregular intervals.

Mr. L. P. Gratacap presented a nest of the Baltimore Oriole, suspended from the branches of a cherry tree. One side of the nest had been supported by means of strands of worsted attached to a branch considerably above the main support, acting in the nature of a guy rope to steady the structure.

May 12th.—Mr. Wm. T. Davis read the following entomological notes of local interest. A very small straw-colored cricket was discovered last August on the borders of the salt meadow at Great Kill. It was chiefly observed on the stems and leaves of the "high tide bushes" (*Iva frutescens*), and was difficult to capture owing to its shyness. When stridulating the sound produced was quite metallic in tone and may be likened to that well-known silvery sound of oxygen escaping bubble by bubble in a water bottle. This insect has been identified as *Anaxipha exigua* Say., and seems to have never been reported before from north of Maryland.

The "earwig" (*Anisolabris maritima*), common several years ago on the shore of Camp Washington, before the advent of the railroad, as noted in the proceedings for January, 1887, was discovered the past Summer at the other end of the Island, on the shore at Tottenville. They live under stones and pieces of wood just at high water mark. On an open sandy spot near Tottenville a species of "tiger beetle" (*Cicindela modesta*), has been observed for the past several years, and last fall a few specimens were seen at Watchogue. These insects have been searched for at intervening points, where the same natural features are present, but have only been discovered at those mentioned.

A specimen of *Erebus odora*, the largest species of noctuid moth to be found on the Island, was presented to the Association. It was taken during last September while flying about a room, at New Dorp, by Miss M. Britton, and is in good condition. Two other specimens have been captured on the Island during the last few years in the month of July, one at "sugar" and the other in a barn. All of these moths are females, as indicated by the three frenula.

Mr. Samuel Henshaw reported the discovery of a wild rabbit's nest in a small pile of tobacco stems thrown out of a grape house. Its position was extremely exposed, the ground being perfectly bare of shrubbery, and workmen constantly employed near it during the day. The nest was small, about the size of an ordinary cocoanut and lined throughout with fur. It was visited by the mother at night only, who, when about to leave, concealed her four young by drawing the stems carefully over them. When the little rabbits were inspected at evening they uttered a faint cry, and if the hand was placed over them their heads bumped with much regularity against it, supposing no doubt that their mother had come to visit them. These inspections by curious visitors, and the danger from the family dog and cats that were constantly prowling about, caused the nest to be deserted and the young died when about two weeks old. The strong odor from the tobacco stems would greatly aid in protecting the nest from predatory prowlers, and it was suggested that the situation may have been chosen for this reason.

June 9th.—Mr. Samuel Henshaw submitted the following notes: The late spring of this year prevented the buds of the forest trees unfolding at their usual time, but when they did begin, their growth was astonishingly rapid. The horse chestnuts had finished their year's growth in nine days, the beech in about ten days, and other trees correspondingly rapid, as if nature was trying to make up for the delay. Indeed, I have noticed that no matter whether it is an early or late spring, by the first week in June all seasons are nearly alike.

The blizzard played queer freaks with the hardy trees; some Japanese maples, that have stood the last twelve years without any protection, have suffered—one is dead and the others have lost a few of their branches. Some of the hardy cypresses have lost all their leaves, and all the tall Lombardy poplars look in a very dilapidated condition, their long slender branches having been whipped by the strong winds, thereby rubbing off the latent buds. Some trees look as if the bark on the windward side had been polished, so great was the force of the beating with ice and snow.

Mr. Sanderson Smith gave an account of *Limax maxima*, which had accidently been omitted when preparing the recently published list of the Mollusca of the Island. The species is an introduced one, and was found some years ago by Mr. Powell at New Port. Mr. Prime and Mr. Smith had discovered it in a cellar in Fourteenth street, N. Y., and at York, Penn., it had been observed feeding on potatoes It has been found in numbers in cellars and cisterns on Staten Island.

Mr. Arthur Hollick gave a brief account of the plants which have been found growing independent of cultivation on Staten Island, of which the following is an abstract:—

Although the plants of the Island were catalogued in 1879, and four appendices subsequently issued, yet there are many facts to be gleaned from these lists which are not generally appreciated and are of considerable interest. Thus, there are 1,264 species and varieties enumerated, all of which are in our herbarium, with the exception of about 30, which have not yet been collected, although reported upon good authority. These species are distributed among 511 genera and 111 families. 1225 are Phanerogams or flowering plants and thirty-nine are the higher Cryptogams—ferns and their allies. The Angiosperms number 916, of which 377 are Polypetalous, 405 are Gamopetalous and 134 are Apetalous. The Gymnosperms number six. The Dicotyledones number 916 and the Monocotyledones 303.

If they are divided roughly into herbs, shrubs and trees, we have 1,094 herbs, eighty-eight shrubs and seventy-two trees. Considering them as native and introduced the numbers are about 1039 native and 225 introduced. The largest family is Compositæ, with its fiftyone genera and 148 species. These latter include twenty-seven Asters and nineteen Golden-rods. Grasses—forty-three genera and 115 species, including nineteen Panicums. Cyperaceæ or sedges—ten genera and eighty-one species, including forty-three Carex. Leguminosæ—twenty-one genera and fifty-four species. Labiatæ—twenty-five genera and forty-eight species. Rosaceæ—thirteen genera and forty-seven species. Caryophylleæ—fifteen genera and thirty-eight species. Scrophularineæ—thirteen genera and thirty-two species. Ericaceæ—fifteen genera and thirty-one species, including eleven which are picked under the common name of "Huckleberry." Cruciferæ—fourteen genera and thirty-one species. Ranunculaceæ –thirteen genera and thirty-one species. Polygonaceæ—three genera and twenty-seven species, including nineteen Polygonums. Lilaceæ—sixteen genera and twenty.five species. Orchidaceæ—twelve genera and twenty-four species. Umbelliferæ—seventeen genera and twenty-two species. In the Ferns we have thirteen genera and twenty-eight species. There are twelve Violets, twelve Oaks, eleven Willows, five Hickories and four Pines. Amongst the large number of plants worthy of particular mention is the *Clematis ochroleuca* Ait., of which an account was given in the proceedings for June 11th, 1887. The "Crane-fly Orchis," (*Tipularia discolor* Nutt.), although accounted a very scarce plant, is abundant throughout nearly all our deep wet woods. Almost without exception all the most troublesome weeds have been introduced, such as the "Pig weeds," "Wormseeds," "Amaranths," "Crab grass," "Wild Carrot," "Ox eye Daisy," etc. Some of the worst weeds have spread so rapidly in recent years that although they are already pests yet no common name has been invented for them. For instance, I can well remember when the first few plants of *Galinsoga parviflora* Cav., made their appearance in this region. It is now to be found nearly everywhere at this end of the Island and is spreading with amazing rapidity. "Trailing arbutus" has almost become a thing of the past, although a few patches still exist, which have not yet been destroyed by "arbutus parties." General memoranda upon our flora will be found in the proceedings for June 13th, 1885, and an account of our forest growth and the few large trees yet remaining, in the proceedings for February 12th and March 12th, 1887. Memoranda have been accumulating since the fourth appendix to the flora was issued, which will probably necessitate a fifth appendix at the end of the present season, so that it will be seen that the work of the botanical collector on Staten Island is not by any means completed, especially when it is remembered that most of the lower orders of cryptogams have hardly been touched. The Diatoms are, however, being catalogued by Mr. E. A. Schultze, and a list of the sea weeds by Mr. Nicholas Pike, is ready for the printer, while a good preliminary list of the mosses is in preparation; but the Liverworts, Lichens, Desmids, Fungi and Protophytes await the future botanist's attention.

October 13th.—Mr. Wm. T. Davis presented natural-sized drawings of leaf forms and fruit of the hybrid oaks found near Richmond Valley, with the following further remarks upon the same:—

Since the September proceedings were printed, the oaks near Richmond Valley have been visited several times by Mr. Hollick, Mr. Gratacap and myself, and they have proved of so much interest that a detailed description of at least some of the trees may be worthy of record.

Nineteen oaks have so far been discovered, each tree having a sort of individuality, and their consideration with a view to clearing up the mooted points is no easy matter, but one that will at least require an extended period of careful observation.

Some leaves represent what has been considered as *Quercus heterophylla*, and are from the tree which I first discovered while looking for willow oaks on the 15th of last July. It is two feet three inches in circumference and about forty feet high. The fruit was not plentiful this Fall. One leaf is the most common type, and there are some without any lateral bristles.

There are eight additional trees greatly alike, and each one, as has been remarked, shows individual character, but a general resemblance in branching, foliage and acorns runs through them all. The leaves are not glossy on the upper surface, but in a few of the trees are slightly downy on their under side, along the mid-rib. The character and position of these oaks would indicate that *Q. phellos* with *Q. palustris* are the parents and this latter tree abounds in the locality. The largest willow oak in the wood stands close to an equally big swamp oak and a typical *heterophylla* about six feet high is growing up within two or three yards of their trunks. This little tree is several hundred feet away from the others of its kind.

In *heterophylla* the average diameter of the empty cups is about three m. m. more than *palustris* and the heighth of the nut is also greater in comparison to its breadth. In *phellos* the acorns are still smaller than in *palustris*, but it is an interesting fact that the proportions come closer to those of *heterophylla*. In Chambers, Encyclopædia it is stated that in hybrids "valuable results are often obtained as to size and abundance of fruit."